

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----041529Z 058480 /43

R 041500Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9493

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 03588

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TECH, ENRG, MNUC, PK, FR
SUBJECT: FRENCH-PAKISTAN REPROCESSING PLANT

REF: A) ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN DISCUSSIONS,
JANUARY 28 AT FRENCH MFA; B) PARIS 3187
1. SUMMARY: DISCUSSION BETWEEN EMBASSY SCICOUN
AND MFA SCIENCE DIRECTOR DE NAZELLE FEBRUARY 3 BROUGHT
OUT FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECT PROJECT. IN
APPROXIMATELY 3 WEEKS, GIVE OR TAKE A WEEK, CONTRACTS
FOR MAJOR PIECES OF EQUIPMENT FOR THE PLANT WILL BE
SIGNED BY THE PAKISTAN ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY. THE
FRENCH FIRM SAINT GOBAIN, IN ADDITION TO ITS ROLE AS
ARCHITECT-ENGINEER FOR THE PROJECT, WILL SUPPLY THE
FUEL ROD CUTTING DEVICE. THAT CONTRACT IS NEARING ITS
FINAL DRAFT AND IS TO BE SIGNED IN ABOUT 3 OR SO WEEKS.
CONTRACTS FOR OTHER MAJOR ITEMS WILL SOON FOLLOW.
THUS ANOTHER ORDER OF MAGNITUDE OF FINANCIAL
COMMITMENTS ARE ENTERED INTO IN THE NEXT 3 TO 6 WEEKS;
ACTUAL DELIVERY OF THE EQUIPMENT COVERED BY THESE
NEW CONTRACTS ARE SEVERAL MONTHS IN THE FUTURE. END
SUMMARY
2. THE FRENCH FIRM OF SAINT GOBAIN HAS A CONTRACT WITH
THE PAKISTAN ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY TO PERFORM ARCHI-
TECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES (A & E), INCLUDING
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INITIAL TRAINING OF PERSONNEL FOR A 100-TON-PER-YEAR
NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT TO BE BUILT IN PAKISTAN.
DISCUSSIONS ON THIS PROJECT HAVE BEEN UNDER WAY FOR THE
PAST FEW YEARS. WHEN THE FINAL GREEN LIGHT WAS GIVEN
IN MAY 1976 WITH THE SIGNING OF THE BILATERAL AND THE
TRILATERAL (IAEA) AGREEMENTS, SAINT GOBAIN BEGAN
FORWARDING BLUEPRINTS, DRAWINGS, AND CONSTRUCTION

SCHEDULES AND SPECIFICATIONS OF THE PLANT TO THE PAKISTAN AUTHORITY. THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT COMMITTED THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO NOT HINDER THE PROGRESS UNDER THE A & E CONTRACT OR OTHER CONTRACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PLANT AND TO PROVIDE CERTAIN FINANCING GUARANTEES FOR SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES.

3. AT THIS TIME, 1 FEBRUARY 1977, THE FOUNDATION AND BUILDING STRUCTURE UP TO THE GROUND LEVEL HAVE BEEN COMPLETED WITH GENERAL CONTRACTOR WORK BY PAKISTAN FIRMS WITH SAINT GOBAIN TECHNICAL ADVISORS ON THE SCENE (NORMAL A & E SERVICE). IN KEEPING WITH THE SCHEDULE, SPECIFICATIONS FOR BIDS ON SPECIAL EQUIPMENT ARE PREPARED AND READY TO BE PUT OUT FOR INTERNATIONAL BIDS (DE NAZELLE STATED THAT BIDS FROM OTHER THAN FRENCH FIRMS WERE TO BE CONSIDERED). APPARENTLY, SAINT GOBAIN IS TO PROVIDE THE FUEL ELEMENT CUTTING DEVICE, AND THAT SPECIFIC CONTRACT WILL BE READY FOR SIGNING IN ABOUT THREE WEEKS' TIME. AT APPROXIMATELY THE SAME TIME BIDS WILL HAVE BEEN RECEIVED ON OTHER PRINCIPAL EQUIPMENT ITEMS, AND CONTRACTS ON THESE ITEMS WILL BE NEARING COMPLETION. THE SAINT GOBAIN PROJECT OFFICIAL TOLD DE NAZELLE THAT THERE IS A ONE TO THREE WEEK FLEXIBILITY IN EACH STEP WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE A & E CONTRACT (NOT CUMULATIVE), BUT BEYOND THAT FINANCIAL PENALTIES RESULT.

4. THESE SPECIAL PIECES OF EQUIPMENT WILL NOT BE READY FOR DELIVERY FOR SEVERAL MONTHS (EACH WOULD HAVE
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ITS OWN EXPECTED DELIVERY DATE). HOWEVER, FROM THE GOF VIEW, THE NEW GENERATION OF CONTRACTS GREATLY EXPANDS THE FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS (AS

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 03588

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WELL AS POSSIBLE PARTICIPANTS). IF THERE IS TO BE A
HALT TO THE PROJECT, THERE ARE FEWER FINANCIAL PROBLEMS
AND COSTS IF SUCH ACTION COMES BEFORE THE SIGNING OF
THESE NEW CONTRACTS.

5. COMMENT: THIS TIME SCHEDULE IS WITHIN THE RANGE
OF THE PAKISTAN ELECTIONS BUT NOT WITHIN THAT RANGE IF
TIME FOR NEGOTIATIONS AFTER ELECTIONS IS TO BE
INCLUDED. WHILE DRAWINGS AND OTHER PAPER MATTERS ARE
IN PAKISTANI HANDS, THERE REMAINS A SIZEABLE SPAN TO
CROSS TO ACHIEVE A WORKING REPROCESSING PLANT. THIS
SPAN COVERS DELIVERY OF THE PRINCIPAL PIECES OF
EQUIPMENT, PLANT START-UP, AND OPERATION TRAINING OF
A LOCAL STAFF. THE PROCESS OF HELPING PAKISTAN
ACQUIRE THE CAPABILITY OF REPROCESSING NUCLEAR MATERIAL
IS NOT A MATTER WHICH UP TO SOME DATE CAN BE FULLY
STOPPED AND BEYOND THAT DATE IS LOST. IF ALL FRENCH
SUPPORT CEASED TODAY, THE PROBABILITY IS SLIGHT THAT
PAKISTAN BY ITSELF COULD COMPLETE THE PROJECT. HOWEVER,
IF A FEW KEY PIECES OF PRINCIPAL EQUIPMENT ARE
DELIVERED, PAKISTAN COULD BE PAST THE BAR AND HAVE A
REASONABLE CHANCE AT EVENTUALLY HAVING AN OPERATIONAL
NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT.

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